Ireland’s Lack of a Coherent Integration Policy

Gerry Boucher
Visiting Scholar
Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative, University College Dublin
(email: gwmoorhouse@hotmail.com)

Abstract
This article offers an explanation of Ireland’s lack of a coherent integration policy, amidst policy fears about the social exclusion of immigrants and their descendants from Irish society. It does so through a critical analysis of a few, key policy documents and speeches by Irish government ministers about Ireland’s immigration and integration policies. It proposes that there are two stages in this process and, that in the second stage, the Irish government has devised a managed immigration policy of EU internal migrants for low skilled jobs, with a selection system for high skilled, non-EU immigrants, that still does not require a coherent integration policy.

Keywords: integration, immigration, laissez-faire, national interest, neo-liberalism, social cohesion, social exclusion

‘…we have little experience to draw upon as we seek to respond to enormous societal challenges in as many years as other countries have had generations. On the other hand…we are in a unique position to draw upon the wisdom of other societies in handling this difficult issue. Although it is a matter of poor comfort to us, other countries, including many in the European Union, are still re-grouping and re-evaluating their integration policies (McDowell 2007: 1).

‘Indeed, the sorry story of much migration to European countries in the second half of the twentieth century involved precisely the attraction, and confinement of, migrants to low-skilled sectors which subsequently suffered severe contraction in the face of international competition and technological change. This left migrants economically and socially marginalised, giving rise to severe problems in the second and even third generations (NESC 2006b: 124).

‘…it is beyond the capacity of government to make integration happen; it cannot compel integration nor can it legislate for it. It will happen because people, long-term resident and newcomer alike, consider it essential to ensure a worthwhile and cohesive future (NESC 2006b: 187).
Introduction: Ireland’s Laissez-faire Approach to Integration

The three quotes above provide a policy discursive context to begin framing a critical analysis of the Republic of Ireland’s presently patch-work integration policy for immigrants. These quotes are discussed below in the main sections of the article. The first section posits an Irish national interest discourse, and non-perception of discrimination. The second examines Ireland’s lack of an integration policy. The third applies these analyses to the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008. The conclusion attempts to explain Ireland’s laissez-faire approach to integration in light of the previous discussions.

Ireland’s official integration policy at the time of writing in early 2008 is more of a collection of policy statements and piece-meal, reactive policy responses to immediate, experiential policy problems arising from immigration\(^1\) and integration\(^2\) than a coherent, integrated policy framework for the short and long-term integration of immigrants and their descendants. As such, it is only possible at this point to begin framing an analysis of that which does not yet fully exist.

The analysis herein is mainly critical in its focus and tone largely because successive Irish governments and civil servants in the relevant departments have failed to construct a systematic integration (let alone immigration) policy for the past decade or so since Ireland statistically became a country of net immigration in 1996. It is also critical because the lack of an integration policy has meant a de facto laissez-faire approach to integration by the Irish state and within Irish society that may lead to a socially exclusive future, not a socially cohesive one.

This laissez-faire approach to integration off-loads much of the success (and lack of success) for integrating into Irish society onto immigrant and indigenous individuals, families, and collective organisations. While the integration outcomes of this laissez-faire approach can be positive for many immigrants and immigrant groups, it tends to benefit most those immigrants and groups who already possessed higher levels of economic, financial, educational, occupational, and socio-cultural resources before their migration to the Republic of Ireland.

Not surprisingly, a laissez-faire approach to integration in the short-term also tends to reinforce and reproduce the already existing hierarchies of wealth, status and power in Irish society. In the long-term, though, if social mobility remains relatively open to immigrants and their descendants, laissez-faire integration can lead to an ethnic diversification of the societal hierarchy, particularly through the incorporation of the

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\(^1\) Following UN recommendations, the IOM defines an international migrant as “a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence” (2003: 296).

\(^2\) The IOM report, World Migration 2005, defines integration as “the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and groups” (2005: 459).
descendants of the already better resourced immigrants who are more likely to successfully integrate into Irish society.

However, a laissez-faire approach to integration is not particularly useful to address institutional and/or individual cases of economic exploitation, abuse of power and discrimination\(^3\) against immigrants and their descendants by indigenous Irish (and non-Irish) people, companies or organisations. While proclamations and policies of equality and anti-discrimination are useful, they are only really so if properly resourced institutionally and financially, and if fully implemented against those who exploit, abuse and discriminate. This necessitates more state regulation and intervention, not less.

But, what if state policies themselves (in non-equality and anti-discrimination policy areas) often lead to immigrant and ethnic minority\(^4\) experiences of exploitation, abuse and discrimination? That is, what if the state itself is part of the problem as well as part of the solution to negative laissez-faire integration outcomes? Arguably, the Irish state’s ongoing construction of increasingly restrictive immigration and citizenship policies since 1997 within its neo-liberal economic policies has at times heightened immigrant and ethnic minority experiences of exploitation, abuse and discrimination in Ireland – often at the ‘hands’ of representatives of the state itself.

The article is divided into five sections. The first examines Ireland’s lack of a coherent integration policy in the European context. The second discusses an Irish national interest discourse in the immigration and integration policy area, and links this to the non-perception of discrimination by state and governmental representatives who make and implement Ireland’s immigration and integration policies. In particular, it analyses key policy statements on integration by, Micheal McDowell, former Tánaiste, and Minister of the Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform [DJELR]. The third looks at the development of Ireland’s ad hoc, fragmented integration policy, primarily focusing on the two NESC reports on migration. The fourth critiques the policy discourse on integration in the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008, and policy statements made by Brian Lenihan, the current Minister of DJELR. The fifth and concluding section provides a two-stage explanation of Ireland’s lack of a coherent integration policy.

**The European Context: Ireland as a Civic Stratifier, Not (Yet) a Civic Integrator**

In a European Union context, Ireland’s lack of a coherent integration is not in itself exceptional, particularly for a new country of immigration. Thus, the European Commission’s *First Annual Report on Migration and Integration* states that, “The definition and content of integration policies differ widely in terms of scope, target, groups and actors” with, “Some member states…combing both actions targeted

\(^3\) The IOM defines discrimination as “a failure to treat all persons equally where no reasonable distinction can be found between those favoured and those not favoured” (2005: 459-60).

\(^4\) Castles and Miller define ethnic minorities as groups which (a) have been assigned a subordinate position in society by dominant groups on the basis of socially constructed markers of phenotype (that is, physical appearance or ‘race’), origins or culture; (b) have some degree of collective consciousness (or feeling of being a community) based on a belief in shared language, traditions, religion, history and experiences’ (2003: 33).
specifically on migrants and a mainstreaming approach”, while “others have a less comprehensive, more fragmented strategy, which is often project-based” (2004: 17). Ireland’s laissez-faire approach falls into the ‘other’ category.

The Commission’s earlier communication on immigration, integration and employment notes that only a minority of EU members at the time had national integration programmes. The report states that, “In countries such as Finland, Denmark and The Netherlands national legislation on integration was passed in 1998 and 1999 and in Austria and Germany initiatives in this respect have also been taken recently” (2003: 38; see also, Carrera 2006). Of the member states with national integration programmes, the communication notes that these, “consist in general of three main components: language tuition, orientation or introduction courses and professional labour market training…which are compulsory to a certain extent” (ibid). The communication adds that, “In the remaining Member States legislation laying down a framework for nation-wide integration programmes does not exist” (CEC 2003: 38). Ireland, again, falls into the majority remainder category.

At the EU level, the European Council adopted eleven Common Basic Principles (CBPs) for EU immigrant integration policy (Council of the European Union 2004). These were subsequently adopted by the Commission as, A Common Agenda for Integration – Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union (CEC 2005). The CBPs preserve the Commission’s focus on integration as a two-way process, while incorporating many of socio-cultural concerns expressed in some of the member states’ national integration programmes.

Thus, the second CBP states that, “Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union”, and notes the importance of, “civic orientation in introduction programmes…with the view of ensuring that immigrants understand, respect and benefit from common European and national values” (CEC 2005: 5). Similarly, the fourth CBP states that, “Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration” (ibid: 6). Civic orientation courses are again cited as “important for third-country nationals to achieve this basic knowledge”, (ibid).

Significantly, the Council stresses that EU integration policies are not legally binding on member states. It states that, “The precise integration measures a society chooses to

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5 The communication explains that, “National integration programmes are dominant in those countries where the main immigration tends to be primarily of family reunification or of a humanitarian nature and where new immigrants consequently do not have a job offer before entering the country and rarely speak the language of the host society upon arrival. Furthermore these countries tend to have highly developed social welfare systems. In other countries…problems seem to be more related to ensuring the proper infrastructure to integrate labour migrants, such as access to housing, social services and healthcare” (CEC, 2004: 37).

6 Carrera updates the Commission’s communication in this regard, discussing the specifics of national integration programmes in Austria, Denmark, France and Germany, and regional programmes in Belgian Flanders and Spain among others.
implement should be determined by individual states…reflecting each individual Member State’s individual history and legal framework” (Council of the European Union, 2004: 16). Instead, the CBPs are designed, “to assist Member States in formulating integration policies by offering them a simple non-binding but thoughtful guide against which they can judge and assess their own efforts” (ibid).

This is directly relevant in the Irish case since, as Bertozzi notes, “Ireland and the United Kingdom have opting-in/opting-out facilities on these Community instruments” (2007: 5) with respect to immigration and integration measures, negotiated as part of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997.\footnote{Bertozzi also note that, “Denmark…has no part in policies under Title IV of the EC Treaty” (2007: 5).} Thus, Smyth in the Irish Times recounts that as of January 2008, “Ireland has decided not to implement at least 53 different EU measures in the field of immigration and asylum” with, “28 of the measures relat[ing] to the EU free travel area Schengen, while the remaining 25 are in the field of immigration” (2008). As such, one would expect Ireland’s integration (and immigration) policies to be both more nationally based and distinctive, with any convergence towards the policies of other EU member states related to Irish national policy choices.

Critical accounts of the European national integration programmes and the EU’s integration policies and discourses have labelled them as ‘neo-assimilationism’ (Schierup et al, 2006: 47) and ‘civic integration’ (Joppke 2007). Joppke’s term refers to the, ‘obligatory civic integration courses and tests’ found, for example, in The Netherlands, France and Germany (ibid: 2). It also refers generally to civic integration, “as an instance of repressive liberalism”, which is, “the equivalent on the part of immigrants to the ‘workfare’ policies that the general population is subjected to in the context of shrinking welfare states…seeking to make people both self-sufficient and autonomous by illiberal means”\footnote{For example, Joppke refers to the third CBP that, ‘Employment is a key part of the integration process’, noting that, ‘Responding to an alarming degree of unemployment and welfare dependence among immigrants and their offspring in Europe…socioeconomic integration has become the key focus of European states’ immigrant integration policies. This reorientation is framed by a new, post-national model philosophy of migrants’ self-sufficiency…according to which – paradoxically – the primary task of the state is to make migrants independent of the state’ (2007: 4).} (ibid: 16; see also, Carrera 2006).

More broadly, Morris links restrictive immigration and civic integration policies in terms of civic stratification, “whereby rights are differentially granted by the state with respect to an expanding range of immigration statuses”\footnote{For instance, the Council of the European Union’s report on the CBPs states that the integration policies of individual Member States may “target diverse audiences, the mix of which varies between the Member States…from temporary workers to permanent residents and to the children of immigrants; from individuals who await to be admitted to those who are already residing; from immigrants who have acquired citizenship to long-established third-country nationals; and from highly skilled refugees to individuals who have yet to acquire the most elementary skills” (2004: 16).} (Morris 2001: 388; see also, McLaughlin and Boucher 2007). Morris argues that, “Analysis of the stratified nature of rights not only provides a measure of degrees of formal integration into the receiving society; it also highlights a dimension of control associated with the granting and delivery of rights” (2001: 389). Further, Morris claims that, “Conditions of transition between statuses necessarily involve an element of selection with respect to long-term settlement”\footnote{Morris also notes, “The reorientation of immigration and integration policies in the European Union and its member states towards a more civic orientation, combined with the increased role of the state in the regulation of the economy…has led to the emergence of new forms of control over the social reproduction of citizenship” (2001: 390).}...
that, “The associated administrative machinery must therefore operate as a system of monitoring and surveillance”, for example, with respect to immigrants’ differential access to ‘social support’ (ibid).

In Ireland, Fanning and Mutwarasibo discuss civic stratification in terms of nationals and non-nationals where, “citizenship becomes not just a set of rights but also a mechanism of exclusion…in which groups of people are differentiated by the legitimate claims they can make on the state” (2007: 452). Fanning argues that, “in twenty-first century Ireland there is a growing disjuncture between citizenship and actual social membership” and that Ireland, like other Western countries, stratifies according to, “Gradations of rights between citizens and non-citizens, immigrant ‘guest’ workers, ‘illegal’ workers, refugees and asylum seekers” (2007b: 240). Further, he claims that, “As the proportion of non-citizens living in Irish society increased so too have the rules that distinguish their rights and entitlements from citizens become more pronounced” (2007a: 7).

In this sense, Ireland’s laissez-faire integration approach converges in its outcomes with other European countries in the processes and mechanisms of its civic stratification of rights and entitlements between nationals and non-nationals. The main differences are in national variations in the administrative categories, rights and entitlements attached to each category, and the changes to these over time, that are used to stratify specific immigrant groups in each country. At the same time, Ireland is one of the many EU member states that currently lacks a national integration programme based on civic integration involving orientation and language tuition, and labour market training. As such, Ireland can be characterised as a civic stratifier, and not (yet) a civic integrator in terms of its integration policy approach in the European context.

**Irish National Interest Discourse and The Non-Perception of Discrimination**

It should be stated at the outset that the author is not claiming that immigrant experiences of exploitation, abuse and/or discrimination are ‘normal’ in their everyday encounter with ‘Irish’ people, sites of interaction or institutions. Nonetheless, there is ample survey evidence to suggest that these negative experiences occur far too often, particularly to those who are ‘non-white’ and especially to those from sub-Saharan Africa (see, for example, Garner 2004: 59-66; Loyal 2003: 86-88; Hughes et al 2007: 235-238). Nor is it to claim that most ‘Irish’ people, including representatives of the state, intend to discriminate against individual immigrants or ethnic minorities (although this is not claimed in terms of cases of exploitation or abuse).

Focusing on governmental and state representatives, the claim is that an individual immigrant’s perceived experience of discrimination is partly a structured outcome of the institutionalisation of restrictive, hierarchical and inherently discriminatory immigration and citizenship policies against ‘non-national’ immigrants who are accorded less rights than ‘Irish nationals’ (see also, Allen 2007; Loyal 2003; Fanning 2007a and b). It is also

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claimed that a state representative’s non-perception of her or his action towards an immigrant as discriminatory is partly a product of the cultural psychological dominance of an Irish policy discourse prioritising a specific view of the national interest in discussions about immigration and integration. Further, it is claimed that the cultural psychological dominance of this national interest discourse primarily affects Irish governmental and state representatives whose official duties include making and/or implementing policies for immigrants and ethnic minorities in Ireland.

Specifically, Irish policy discourses about immigration and integration have focused on serving the national interest in the economy, while protecting the nation through border control, rule of law and internal regulation, and preserving the cohesion of Irish national identity and culture (see NESC 2006b: xiii, 109-110, 119-121). At the same time, these policy discourses about immigration and integration in the nation(al) interest co-exist with liberal discourses about the need for equality and anti-discrimination, and for cultural diversity in the form of interculturalism and integration as a two-way process (Watt 2006). As such, a state representative can without internal contradiction perceive his or her action towards an immigrant as both serving the national interest and fostering intercultural integration even if the immigrant perceives the action as discriminatory.

However, it is fully recognised that these claims are hypotheses that need to be subjected to empirical investigation, particularly with respect to the attitudes and practices of Irish governmental and state representatives working in the immigration and integration policy areas (see, for example, Jordan et al 2003) Given the state of currently available social scientific evidence in this field of study, the focus in this section will be on critically analysing a significant text from the publicly available policy discourse of one key, former governmental policy-maker in the immigration and integration policy area.

There is probably no better personal exemplification of this Irish national interest discourse in Irish public life than in the political actions of Michael McDowell, the recently retired, former Tánaiste, Minister of the DEJLR, Attorney General, TD, and leader of the Progressive Democrats. In the speech cited above, McDowell presents a very positive vision of an Ireland changing due to immigration and integration. He persuasively argues that we [the Irish] have, “The opportunity to evolve through dialogue to a new definition of ourselves which, while reflecting a new and diverse society, still incorporates the republic and liberal democratic concepts underpinning the Irish nation” (2007: 1). Yet, in his official capacity as Minister of DEJLR, he was one of the architects of Ireland’s restrictive immigration regime in the national interest, and the main architect of the Citizenship Referendum in 2004, and subsequent legislation that removed the jus soli right to Irish citizenship to one largely based on Irish parentage (see also, Lentin and McVeigh 2006: 1, 5, 17; O’Toole 2006: iii).11

11 A second textual example of this non-perception of discrimination in the national interest comes from a document written in 2005 by McDowell for the DEJLR web-site concerning the ‘real facts’ about Ireland’s asylum and deportation systems. In this document, McDowell claims that, “A small but well placed minority of commentators have sought to create the impression that Ireland’s treatment of asylum seekers is harsh and unfair. They have consistently concealed the real facts from the Irish people. Moreover, they have sought to create the impression that anyone who points the true situation is engaging in political racism…They refuse to address the very large abuse of asylum protection in Ireland… Our approach to the
It is also important to note that Minister McDowell was very much aware of the linkage between immigration and integration policies, and in their combined effect on achieving his liberal, republican vision of a future, intercultural Irish nation. In the same speech, he says that, “I acknowledge the critical links between the immigration, visa, asylum and integration areas. Activities in all of these areas affect the other” (2007: 2). In particular, he states that, “Changes to our immigration laws are changes to the integration landscape. Policies on citizenship, family reunification, determination of legal status linked to rights of access to services – all are factors in building successful integration policies” (ibid).

Further, he argues that, “we are taking significant steps” in adapting Irish institutions and policies, citing the establishment of an Integration Unit within the Irish National Immigration Service [INIS] and an Integration Fund (ibid). “All of this”, he claims, “builds on the very firm integration bedrock already established by the National Action Plan against Racism [NAPR]…[that] incorporates intercultural frameworks which involve principles of inclusion, accommodating diversity in service provision and full participation in Irish society – the core tenets of any integration policy” (2007: 2-3). “The Challenge now”, he suggests, is to “go beyond anti-racism measures…to understand the totality of initiatives needed to work towards societal cohesion” (2007: 3).

However, later in the speech, McDowell poses the question, “Is integration…solely a Government project?”, and emphatically answers, “Clearly it is not” (2007: 8). Instead, he claims that, “It is everyone’s business because everyone is involved directly at the level of their community – which is where integration succeeds or fails” (ibid; see also, NESC 2006a: 149). He also recognises a cultural psychological dimension to the integration process, “because at its core, it is about changing hearts and minds” (ibid). McDowell acknowledges a social interactional component too, “because integration…permeates the daily lives of every Irish man, woman and child as they go about the daily business of their social, economic, religious and cultural lives” (ibid).

issue of protection is based on achieving a balance between fairness and firmness – fairness in ensuring that those genuinely in need of protection receive that protection quickly; firmness in dealing rigorously with abuses in our system which tie up resources which could be better used elsewhere”.

12 Gilligan points out that that a few, high profile academic experts have recently come out in support of laissez-faire approaches to integration. Thus, he writes that, “Both Favell [2005] and Malik [2005] suggest that ethnic minorities are not victims in need of state assistance, but are autonomous individuals who are able to develop their own ways of organising to support themselves with others…and both…suggest that ethnic minorities may be best served by a laissez-faire, rather than a state-led approach to integration” (2006: 48). Of course, this depends on the state-led approach.

13 This perspective on integration comes directly from the first NESC report on Managing Migration in Ireland, specifically chapter nine on ‘Fostering Integration’ attributed to Meyer Burstein, a Canadian specialist on urban multiculturalism. Burstein argues that, “Immigration, and specifically integration, is a process that unfolds over generations’ and that “the ability of governments to execute integration strategies successfully is constrained by their own limited role in the process of integration” (2006a: 149). “For the most part”, he adds, “it is not governments that integrate migrants, but the general public, especially the residents of large cities…where the majority of migrants settle. The role of government concentrates on providing essential core services, ensuring that these services are accessible, and creating the necessary frameworks to help shape a welcoming environment” (ibid).
So, what is the role of government in the integration process according to McDowell? “Of course”, he says, “this does not excuse Government from needing to play critical and leading roles” as a regulator, facilitator and policy developer (2007: 8-9). “As a regulator”, he argues that, “it must set the rules whereby people are admitted and their status and entitlements defined” which sometimes “involves difficult decisions in finding a balance between security and control issues and downstream immigration impacts” (2007: 8). It is relevant to note here that McDowell’s primary role for government returns to the national interest part of the policy discourse, emphasising regulation in terms of border control, the categorisation of immigrants and the internal law and order functions of government. The liberal equality, anti-discrimination and intercultural aspects of the policy discourse are notable for their absence from the government’s regulatory duties in the integration process.

Yet, in its second and third roles as facilitator and policy developer, McDowell draws on a liberal version of social partnership discourse, claiming that the government, “must bring together a very wide variety of both public and private stakeholders” and that it, “must lead, coordinate, stimulate and listen” to this “vast array of interests” (2007: 9). This social partnership style facilitation is intended to infuse the government’s policy development in which, “it must consult and develop frameworks which allow constructive debates and discussions around key strategies for moving towards a cohesive society” (ibid).

This is a liberal version of social partnership discourse because, while the government may coordinate and listen to, and discuss the opinions expressed by various interest groups from society about immigration and integration policy issues, it is not obliged and makes no commitment to incorporate these opinions into policy-making or implementation. This is social partnership ‘lite’ in which the government retains the ultimate sovereign authority and power to make and implement immigration and integration policy to suit its priorities and interests. And, as McDowell makes clear in his first role for government in the integration process, its over-riding priority is to protect Ireland’s national interest in terms of border control, immigrant categorisation and law and order.

Further, while McDowell acknowledges that there are ‘downstream integration impacts’ of these national interest based ‘security and control’ immigration and integration policies, he does not elaborate on what these impacts are on the immigrant integration process in Ireland? In particular, he does not discuss at all whether security and control based immigration and integration policies foster ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ integration outcomes in either the short- or the long-term for immigrants and their descendants in Ireland? And, if these downstream integration outcomes are intended to be positive, then how exactly do security and control based immigration and integration policies defined in terms of protecting the national interest foster these positive integration outcomes for ‘non-nationals’ and, if they remain in Ireland, their ‘national’ descendants?

This is the ‘missing link’ between the national interest immigration and integration policy discourse and its empirical, everyday and inter-generational, effects on the actual
integration processes of Ireland’s current cohort of immigrants and ethnic minorities. It is also the ‘blind-spot’ between the national interest policy discourse and the individual governmental and state representative’s inability to perceive the potential discriminatory effects of Ireland’s already existing immigration and integration policies on the lives of non-nationals and their descendants.

Yet, it is also the link that connects the regulatory, social partnership lite (and intercultural) roles for government in integration, and a laissez-faire devolution of the actual daily, interactive processes of integration to non-nationals and nationals in Irish society. That is, the government’s main priority is to protect the national interest through its immigration and integration policies, while providing an intercultural framework within which individual immigrants integrate into the liberal, republican Irish nation. How exactly, though, does McDowell propose that a predominantly laissez-faire integration policy, buttressing national interest liberal based immigration policies, will lead to short and long-term positive integration outcomes for immigrants and ethnic minorities in Ireland?

While McDowell does not attempt to provide this missing link, he recognises that the policy choices made today, and by implication those policy choices that have already been made on immigration and integration, have a profound effect on the future of Irish national society. “Standing at the integration crossroads”, he metaphorically argues, “we need to carefully examine those choices because if we journey down the wrong road, it may not be easy to find our way back. Neither may we have the time for the return journey” (2007: 10). By not addressing the issue of the missing link, though, McDowell cannot see whether Ireland is already journeying down the wrong integration road from which there is no return. And the blind spot of the non-perception of discrimination becomes a kind of integration blindness.

**Standing at the Integration Crossroads**

If the exact linkage between Ireland’s immigration and integration policies and positive integration outcomes is not made clear, it is clearer that Irish governmental and state representatives in these policy areas are fearful that Ireland’s long-term integration outcomes in the second and third generations will be similar to the negative experiences of many other European countries of post-WWII immigration. This is explicitly stated in the second quote before the introduction from the NESC report on Migration Policy. In particular, there seems to be a policy fear about the long-term social exclusion of immigrants and their descendants from Irish society, threatening the Irish nation and Ireland’s social cohesion.

This fearfulness is directly expressed in many sections of the NESC report on Migration Policy. Because NESC reports have to be approved not only by governmental and state

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14 Following Burstein, the NESC report on Migration Policy states that the, “National government undoubtedly has a critical role in addressing the integration challenge through the creation of overarching and symbolic frameworks that set out the rights and responsibilities of societal membership” (2006: 183-184).
representatives, but by the social partners and other interest groups represented on its board, it offers a useful insight into the collective thinking and emotions of these Irish policy-makers and influencers in terms of Ireland’s immigration and integration policies. The fear of social conflict arising from immigration is one of the underlying emotional themes of this NESC report that must be rationally addressed in policy discourse.

The authors of the report frame this social problem in terms of societal change: “social change invariably creates discomfort. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the profound changes introduced by immigration and growing racial, cultural and religious diversity can generate conflict and reduce overall levels of trust within society” (2006b: 184). In historical and comparative terms, the authors note specifically that, “International experience shows that where migrants are denied access to work, or where they are segmented to particular (often vulnerable) sectors, they can fail to integrate, with negative consequences for both themselves and the host society in the long term” (2006b: 111).

Yet, asylum seekers in Ireland are denied access to work; and, Ireland’s version of the Germanic gastarbeiter or guest worker system, the work permit scheme under which the vast majority of Ireland’s non-EEA legal immigrants entered, worked and lived in the country from 1993 to 2006, bonded immigrant workers to their employers and denied them full economic, political, social and cultural citizenship rights (Loyal 2007: 40-42; Allen, 2007: 85-86). Further, immigrants on work permits were highly segmented to often vulnerable sectors of the economy. Overall, Loyal notes that, “About 75 per cent of all these work permits were allocated to relatively low skilled occupations” (2007: 41). So, the Irish experience should show the failure of these immigrants to integrate, with negative consequences for themselves and Irish society. However, as with McDowell’s later speech, this linkage is not made, and integration blindness along the journey down the wrong road is not seen.

This raises the questions of what is Ireland’s current integration policy? And, what does ‘integration’ mean in contemporary Irish policy discourse? In terms of the first question, Burstein directly states in the IOM report for NESC that, as of 2006, “Ireland’s few integration programmes are largely confined to refugees” (2006a: 153). This statement should be understood in the broader context of the IOM critique of Irish immigration policies: “Until recently, Ireland’s immigration strategies were quite rudimentary…they were essentially reactive and accommodative” (2006a: xvii, 168). So, according to the IOM, rudimentary and reactive immigration policies were accompanied by a very narrow integration policy that focused almost wholly on refugees.

For example, Kuhling and Keohane argue that Ireland’s system of direct provision for asylum-seekers, instituted in April 2000, “fosters an intergenerational cycle of structural dependency, since it reproduces a negative image of asylum seekers, and forecloses any possibility of a positive, constructive identity among asylum seekers and their children” (2007: 58). More broadly, Fanning argues that, “Policies aimed at treating immigrants as just economic actors are likely to have unintended consequences. These include the long-term cost to Irish society of deliberately marginalising immigrant communities” (2007: 247). For a discussion of these questions in an EU context, particularly with respect to the EU’s Common Basic Principles of integration, see Gray (2006) and Mac Énri (2007).
As such, Ireland’s current integration policy is characterised more by policy statements than about actual policies made and implemented. Both Fanning (2007b: 247-248) and Gray (2006: 131) trace the origins of Ireland’s integration policy to a different set of policy statements, reflecting their respective interests\(^\text{17}\), although both acknowledge the central role of the report, *Integration: A Two Way Process*, written by the (unnamed) Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland, published by the DJELR (2000). This report can be seen as a reactive, piece-meal response to the experiential policy problem of integrating those asylum-seekers recognised as refugees by the Irish state. As noted by Burstein above, it does not address the integration of all other categories of immigrants to Ireland, notably asylum-seekers, and those on work permits and work visas and authorisations.

We will focus here on Gray’s analysis of this policy document. Initially, Gray states that ‘Integration is defined in the [DJELR] report as ‘the ability to participate in Irish society to the extent that person needs, and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity’ (2006: 132; IWGIRI 2000: 42). The overall objective is to ‘promote the development of a tolerant inclusive society in Ireland in which everyone, irrespective of background, can participate and share a sense of commitment’ (2006: 133-134; IWGIRI 2000: 43).\(^\text{18}\)

In the report’s main body, however, Gray identifies other “assumptions underpinning the notion of integration”, namely the refugee’s “willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of Irish society without abandoning or being expected to abandon one’s own cultural identity” and Irish society’s “willingness to accept refugees on the basis of equality and to take action to facilitate access to services, resources, and decision-making processes in parity with Irish nationals” (2006: 133-134). It is double willingness that forms the basis of the two-way process of Irish integration.

Despite the multicultural form of this definition of integration, Gray argues that it is actually, “In line with neo-liberal modes of governance” with respect to migration in which “individuals and groups are invited to be active and to take responsibility for their own integration” (2006: 133). Thus, Gray claims “integration policies must foster self-sufficient and autonomous immigrants, who must work on themselves in order to be independent, and committed to contributing to the Irish economy and society” (ibid).

In this sense, the underlying emphasis of DJELR report is less about the multicultural right to cultural diversity than about legitimising a laissez-faire integration strategy in which individual immigrants are meant to apply neo-liberal modes of governance to themselves by taking responsibility for their own economic, social, cultural and political integration. The state’s minimal role is facilitate equality of access and, as argued by

\(^{17}\) Thus, Fanning traces the original statement to the Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community (2005), while Gray identifies the later Report of the Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants (2002).

\(^{18}\) Fanning adds that, “In essence this definition has two components. The first relates to the rights and resources needed to participate fully in society. The second concerns forms of racism which justify discrimination and inequality” (2007b: 248).
Fanning, to address forms of racism through equality and anti-discrimination measures (2007b: 248).

What this integration strategy means for immigrants’ rights to maintain their cultural identity is not clear? Is it not more likely that this neo-liberal, laissez-faire integration strategy will pressure immigrants to ‘choose’ to integrate into Irish society by assimilating to Irish national culture and social practices? This is another missing link in the Irish policy discourse on immigration and integration. It is also potentially another blind spot obscuring the journey down the wrong integration road.

The most recent official policy statement on integration is found in the NESC response to the IOM report. As discussed by NESC (2006c), the ‘integration challenge’ is more about maintaining social cohesion and social order by individual immigrants adapting to the existing Irish national society, rather than the government or Irish society adapting to the changes arising from immigration and cultural diversity. It also defines integration in terms of facilitating Irish national social cohesion and social order, by encouraging immigrants to individually integrate by themselves through de facto assimilation, not by retaining their own cultural identity.

Drawing directly on Burstein’s discussion of the ‘general policy lessons’ about integration involving a minimum level of ‘social and economic integration’ in the first NESC report (2006a: 153), the NESC report proposes seven specific conditions of integration for the individual immigrant. These are the abilities: “to communicate well in the language of the host community”; “be economically independent”; “obey the law”; “respect democratic institutions”; “pay taxes”; “participate in the political process”; and “seek to develop an empathy with the society they wish to join” (2006b: 184).

Following both the DJELR report and Burstein’s analysis, NESC argues that the minimum responsibilities of government in terms immigrant integration involve providing equality of opportunity and access with regards to each migrant being, “able to find work commensurate with their abilities and qualifications; having access to adequate housing and transportation; and having access to critical services, especially health and education” (ibid).

However, while NESC acknowledges the importance of anti-discrimination measures, it accepts Burstein’s critique of the limitations of these policies with respect to facilitating

19 Fanning distinguishes between, “integration, defined in terms of capacity to participate fully in society, and assimilation, whereby the surrender of cultural distinctiveness becomes the cost of social membership” (2007b: 237).

20 Mac Eíne and the DJELR report and Burstein’s analysis, NESC argues that the minimum responsibilities of government in terms immigrant integration involve providing equality of opportunity and access with regards to each migrant being, “able to find work commensurate with their abilities and qualifications; having access to adequate housing and transportation; and having access to critical services, especially health and education” (ibid).

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21 Specifically, Burstein’s conditions of integration are that: “immigrants are…able to communicate well in the language of the host community; be economically independent and able to find work commensurate with their abilities and qualifications; have access to adequate housing and transportation; have access to critical services, especially health and education; [and] obey the law, respect democratic institutions, pay taxes and participate in the political process” (NESC, 2006a: 153).
integration (2006a: 15622). Thus, it claims that, “Anti-racism measures can, at best produce tolerance…but such measures are unlikely to produce integration, which cannot be compelled or achieved through exhortation or sanction…[and] are insufficient to encompass the scope of the integration challenge” (2006b: 186). Further, the NESC authors note that the flagship National Action Plan Against Racism - cited as the very firm integration bedrock of Irish policy in this area by McDowell above - has “no statutory basis nor a specific budget allocated for the implementation of the actions contained in the NPAR” (2006b: 211)23.

It is also important to note that, contrary to McDowell’s praise above of the institutional changes made by the state to adapt to Ireland’s integration needs and the facilitative role of the state, the IOM report is far more critical. It is worth quoting extensively from their conclusion about Ireland’s fragmented immigration and integration system:

Given that migration impacts on the work of many government departments and stakeholders, it will be necessary to develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach…there is currently no clearly defined lead agency to develop migration policy and coordinate efforts to manage migration within government. For example, migration and integration policies are still conceived and delivered in silos. Few policy coordination mechanisms exist, and those that do are rudimentary…there are currently no permanent inter-departmental committee or working group on migration. Nor are there mechanisms in place to enable regular coordination with relevant stakeholders outside the government (2006a: 199-200)24.

As such, it is more accurate to say that Ireland’s official integration policy in early 2008 is more a series of policy statements, and ad hoc responses to public policy issues such as refugees, racism, and the need for immigrant labour. The main emphasis in the policy discourse, and few policies on integration, has been on restricting the state’s role in the integration process, and devolving responsibility for integration primarily to individual immigrants, their communities and NGOs (NESC 2006b: 184). We have focused here on

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22 Burstein claims that, “anti-racism and anti-discrimination legislation provide a valuable means for attacking overt racism in the workplace and classroom. Their value in addressing more concealed forms of discrimination is, however, limited” (2006a: 156).

23 Fanning notes too that, “In the Irish case debates about integration must contend with political responses to immigration that have removed a range of social entitlements from new immigrants…New immigrants, that is to say, non-citizens, excluded from social citizenship, often find themselves outside the remit of many intercultural policies” (2007b: 238).

24 The NESC report describes the organisational configuration of Ireland’s immigration and integration policy system in 2006 in these terms: the “DJELR is the lead Department for immigration and citizenship policy and, in that context, had the major responsibility for dealing with asylum matters, operational responsibility for visa policy and processing, leave to remain, and security issues. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has responsibility for processing and issuing visas, although this is now shared significantly with DJELR…The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) has responsibility for labour migration policy and for monitoring and enforcement of employment law. The Garda National Immigration Bureau, GNIB, (established in 2001) has responsibility for the enforcement of Employment Permits legislation, border controls, registration of non-nationals, and deportation, anti-trafficking measures and investigations. The Department of Social and Family Affairs (DFSA) has responsibility for social assistance for migrants” (2006b: 215-216).
the laissez-faire, neo-liberal aspects of this devolution of integration to the individual immigrant. Further, while proclaiming state support for liberal policies on equality, anti-racism and discrimination, the implementation of these policies is not well-resourced, and their effects are limited with respect to facilitating integration; and, the underlying basis of the intercultural policy of integration as a two-way process is more about the individual immigrant choosing to assimilate to Irish culture and society than choosing to maintain their own cultural identity.

Currently too, policy-making and implementation occur within a fragmented immigration and integration policy system. This fragmented policy system is based on politically well-insulated, relatively autonomous organisational groups of governmental and state policy-makers and implementers in the immigration and integration policy areas, whose primary duties are to define and protect the national interest. However, within this policy system of competing organisational groups, it is the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and particularly its Minister, that is the organisational prince among princes as noted by NESC, and exemplified above by former Minister McDowell. We turn now to the newest occupant of this post, and his ministerial colleague, and brother in DJELR.

Owing A Duty to Irish Society

Under the new government elected in May 2007, the brothers Brian and Conor Lenihan are the Minister of the DJELR and the newly created Minister of State for Integration respectively. The Minister of State, Conor Lenihan, has promised much in re-founding Ireland’s integration policy, principally through the creations of a taskforce on integration, a ministerial council and an immigrant commission. In particular, the proposed taskforce is intended to ‘help draw up a blueprint for dealing with issues arising from large-scale immigration into Ireland’; and ‘to draw up recommendations for the Government’ with the goals of helping to ‘create cohesive communities and ensure migrants meet their real potential’ (O’Brien 2007). As of early 2008, however, these are just policy promises made while standing at the integration crossroads.

Instead, it is the new Minister of the DJELR, Brian Lenihan, who has moved beyond policy promises to re-launch a revised version of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008, initially submitted to the Dáil by former Minister McDowell in 2007 (GOI 2007) before the election. In launching the revised bill, Lenihan

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25 The main institutional innovation noted by NESC, “is the establishment of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)’ [within the DJELR in March 2005]. The Service incorporates the DJELR’s existing structures dealing with asylum, immigration and citizenship and the Visa section of the DFA…INIS is responsible for developing the government’s response to immigration, citizenship and asylum issues. The economic migration policy function remains with the Minister for DETE…INIS is establishing a new Integration Unit to promote and co-ordinate social and organisational measures across government for the acceptance of lawful immigrants into Irish economic and cultural life. Its initial focus was on the integration of refugees and others from outside the EEA given leave to remain. However, it subsequently acquired the task of leading government thinking on the wider challenge of integration and the building of a comprehensive integration policy” (216-217).
acknowledges that dealing with the policy issues of immigration and integration were, “change[s] that…our legislation was not best suited to handling”, and that the various immigration acts passed from the late 1990s were, “primarily stopgap measures designed to address particular aspects of the matter” (2008: 1).

However, he proclaims, “Today marks a most important development in the area of migration into state” with the Bill making, “a significant step along the road towards modernising the way we deal with inward migration” (ibid). It seems that the Irish nation is no longer at McDowell’s crossroads, but is high-stepping its way on the modern road to a positive, long-term immigration and integration future. So, what is on this road that Lenihan’s bill is paving?

Here we return to the national interest policy discourse minus almost all of its liberal veneer. After summarising Minister Lenihan’s speech at the bill’s launch, the DJELR accompanying document states emphatically that, “It is a fundamental principle of immigration law that a foreign national has no right, as such, to enter or be in Ireland” (2008: 5). Instead, the authors of the document state that:

The State has not only the power (a power exercised mainly by the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform) to manage the entry to, presence in and removal from the State of non-nationals, but has a duty to do so in protection of the interests of Irish society (ibid).

As such, one of the ‘core principles’ underlying the bill, “is that a foreign national will be lawfully present in the State only if he or she has a current valid residence permit or permission to be in the State” (2008: 7). However, the authors insist, “If a person is unlawfully in the State, the obligation will be on himself or herself to leave, and a refusal to leave may result in removal of the person from the State” (ibid). Further, if the unlawfully present individual does not remove himself or herself, then the State will, ‘if necessary’ do so “against the person’s will and if necessary with arrest and detention for that purpose” (ibid).

So, Minister Lenihan’s stroll along the modern road of Ireland’s immigration future is actually a return to a traditional ‘law and order’ understanding of immigration defined in the national interest. Specifically, it is the primary duty of the state, in the person of the Minister, to protect the Irish nation from those unlawfully present in the country, and it is the responsibility of those unlawfully present to leave, or be arrested, detained and deported. How, as the DJELR document claims, this “puts in place an integrated statutory framework for the development and implementation of Government immigration policies into the future” (2008: 1) is not clear, except if immigration is defined solely in terms of protecting the national interest by defending the Irish nation against unlawfully present, non-national immigrants.

Or, as Ireland’s new, self-proclaimed, national protector against unlawfully present, non-national immigrants expresses it:

I owe a duty to Irish society…to continue to ensure to the greatest extent possible that Ireland is a safe place to live, with an economy that continues to thrive, and
that is not used as a base for criminality…I fulfil that duty by making choices about which foreign nationals can come in, which ones can stay and, ultimately, which ones must leave…I make no apologies for the elements of this Bill that might appear harsh to some (2008: 5).

Could the non-perception of discrimination against immigrants not be made clearer?

The one apparently liberal component of the revised bill concerns an important component of integration, namely “the establishment on a statutory footing of the status of long-term residence” (Lenihan, 2008: 3). Minister Lenihan acknowledges that, “unlike many continental countries, we have not had a formal status long-term residence” (2008: 4). He also admits that, “For too long, the Irish immigration system has operated on the concept of temporary migration on a year-to-year basis until one has sufficient residence in the state to be able to make an application for naturalisation” (ibid).

Creating long-term residence status will address this shortcoming by, “put[ting] its holders in a position similar to that of Irish citizens in respect to State-funded services and other entitlements” (ibid), equalising social and economic citizenship rights for lawfully present, non-national immigrants with this new status. ‘The conditions’ of long-term residence status have been, according to the Minister, “designed to ensure that those who qualify are well on the road to integration in their adopted society” (ibid). So, we are back on that modern road again, this time to a positive integration future in a socially cohesive, Irish nation.

But, why has the Minister chosen now to introduce this long-term residence status? It appears that this has less to do with a liberal acceptance of the rights of immigrants to a secure residence and equal citizenship status, than with the perceived needs of the Irish national economic interest in a globalising world economy. Thus, he argues that:

In circumstances where, increasingly, Ireland is in competition with other countries for people with sought-after skills and qualifications, we need this status, statutorily guaranteed, in order to be able to tailor immigration packages that make Ireland an even more attractive destination for medium-term and long-term migration (ibid).

Further, the authors of the DJELR accompanying document add that, “There will be provision for shorter qualifying periods where, the Minister determines that this would be desirable to attract particularly sought-after migrants” (2008: 9). Significantly, the DJELR document also states that the introduction of long-term residence status, “should be seen in tandem with the Employment Permits Act 2006 (GOI 2006) and the ‘Green Card’ type employment permits”\(^\text{26}\), whose “holders…will qualify for the accelerated

\(^{26}\) The NESC report states that, “The Employment Permits Act (2006) provides a framework for a new system for regulating labour migration. One of key elements of the proposed system is the issuing of ‘Green Cards’…[This] is a visa which provides the right to apply for residency after two years…the new system will have three components: Pillar one is a system of Green Cards for most occupations with an annual salary over €60,000 and for occupations with skill shortages and salaries between €30,000 and €60,000. Pillar two is a work permit system for a very restricted list of occupations with salaries up to €30,000 and for those occupations above €30,000 not eligible for Green Cards. Pillar three is a re-established intra-Company transfer scheme for temporary trans-national management transfers…The Green
process for becoming a long-term resident” (ibid). Why are these last clauses significant? Now we come to the crux of the matter to be addressed in the concluding section.

**Conclusion: Welcome, If You Suit Our National Interest**

How does one explain Ireland’s continuing lack of a coherent integration policy, and reliance on de facto laissez-faire integration processes? Further, how does one explain this amidst policy fears about the long-term social exclusion of immigrants and their descendants from Irish society, threatening the social cohesion of the future Irish nation? The answer, in the end, simple enough, comes in two stages.

In the first stage, say from 1993 to 2002, as Minister Lenihan admits, Ireland did not need a coherent integration policy, except for the asylum-seekers that the state recognised as refugees, because legal immigration was officially deemed in the national economic interest as temporary labour migration, with legal immigrant workers supposed to leave Ireland when the state decided it was in the national interest for them to do so. As such, there was no need to link immigration to integration policy, or to institutionally re-organise and resource a state led, long-term integration strategy, since ad hoc measures to meet arising integration issues would suffice.

However, as the economy kept growing and the demand for immigrant labour continued after the end of the Celtic Tiger boom in 2001, there was a need to re-evaluate immigration and integration policy, particularly in the context of the impending accession of the new member states in 2004. In the spring of 2003, the government began instituting a new immigration policy with the Employment Permits Act (GOI 2003), with the intention that, “local employers would be able to fill most of their vacancies after 1 May 2004, from within the enlarged European Union” (NESC 2006b: 30). That is, the government intended that internal European migrants from the new member states would primarily fill the jobs that required lower skills, education and pay.

At the same time, the government began moving towards, “a more managed approach to regulate the number and selection of migrant workers to Ireland from outside the enlarged European Union” (ibid). This more managed approach involved the establishment of the ‘Green Card’ and new work permit system in the Employment Permits Act 2006 to seek to attract more highly skilled, educated and paid, non-EU immigrants who would have an expedited right to permanent residence. Minister Lenihan’s proposed long-term residence status adds another building block to this new managed, modernised road to EU and non-EU immigration to Ireland.

Card system will be for occupations where there are high-level or strategic skill shortages….Green Cards will be issued for two years initially, with permanent or long-term residence normally being granted after that. Green Card holders will be permitted to bring their spouses and families to join them immediately, and their spouses will have the right to work without a work permit. With the implementation of the new Green Card system the existing Work Visa/Work Authorisation scheme will be discontinued” (2006b: 149), after 1 January 2007.
So, how does this shift to a more managed approach to immigration relate to Ireland’s continuing lack of an integration policy, yet address the fears about long-term social exclusion of immigrants and their descendants, and their threat to the social cohesion of the future Irish nation? According to NESC, one of the rationales for the shift in immigration policy is, “to avoid the mistakes of other countries in operating policies to attract low-skilled workers on a (supposed) temporary basis” (2006b: 164). While it is not stated, the fear is that these non-EU low-skilled workers and their descendants could become the socially excluded, ethnic minorities of the future, if they became permanent residents in Ireland. This part of the fear is addressed by relying on internal EU migrants for low skilled work, who are not only European, but mostly ‘white’ and predominantly Catholic (from Poland and Lithuania) or Christian. The assumption appears to be that this type of immigrant will be more likely to integrate in both the short- and long-term to the Irish nation, maintaining societal cohesion.

The selection of non-EU immigrants by skill, education and salary level through the Green Card system, and provision to these immigrants of long-term residence status and greater citizenship rights, is intended to address the other side of the fear. This is fear about the short- and long-term integration of culturally, and perhaps phenotypically different, high skilled immigrants and their descendants into Irish society. The government here seems to be persuaded by Burstein’s argument in the IOM report that a managed policy of immigrant selection based on factors such as skill, educational and income level, similar to the Canadian and Australian ‘points’ systems, results in more positive integration outcomes27, even if the immigrants are more culturally and phenotypically distinct from the indigenous national population28.

In the second stage, then, say from 2003 to the present, the Irish government has intentionally linked a managed immigration policy of EU internal migrants for low skilled jobs, with a selection system for high skilled, non-EU immigrants, to an integration strategy that still does not require a coherent integration policy. It simply assumes that these newer groups of EU and non-EU immigrants will largely integrate into Irish society by themselves, through the neo-liberal modes of self-governance identified by Gray (2006: 133). As such, the government does not need to abandon its present fragmented, cost-effective, de facto assimilationist and laissez-faire integration policy.

27 According the Burstein, the important point “is that policies favouring immigrants with higher education and better skills also produce communities and urban settings that are better endowed with human and social capital. This, in turn, improves the integration capacity of society and the prospects of migrants. Not because the state invests more, but because immigrant communities are better able to assist their members to settle. The upshot is that investment in skilled labour selection produces not only immediate benefits in the form of lower integration costs, but also an elevated capacity to settle future entrants” (2006c: 159).

28 Burstein adds that, “The fact that Canada’s immigration programme selects individuals who are visibly successful, economically self-sufficient, who value education for their children and who aspire to owning their own homes and cars reassures Canadians that their values will be respected and their communities enhanced...A less positive trajectory results from the admission and settlement of low-skilled labour. At a minimum, integration needs would be higher and the likelihood of pubic support lower” (2006c: 160).
According to this rosy view, the problems of long-term social exclusion experienced by immigrants and their descendants in many of the older countries of European immigration, will be avoided. Instead, Ireland will proceed (in a car no doubt) down the modern road of positive integration outcomes, where a socially cohesive, future Irish nation awaits, welcoming only those who suit the Irish national interest. And, for those who are not welcome, or who over-stay their welcome, there is always the non-perception of discrimination, and a range of formal and informal social exclusions from Irish society.

These social exclusions include: structural barriers such as lesser rights and entitlements to welfare goods and services related to civic stratification; institutional barriers like unequal access to goods and services based on phenotypical, ethnic, or national differences related to racism (Fanning 2007a: 13, 16); and, interactional barriers such as marginalisation from ‘Irish’ social networks based on family, friends and colleagues related to the socio-cultural limits of Irish ‘friendliness’ (Boucher 1998). And, for foreign nationals who have overstayed their welcome and been caught by Irish authorities, it may include arrest, detention and deportation in the national interest.

In a European context, it is not clear that Ireland’s lack of a coherent integration policy will lead to the socially cohesive, future Irish nation that is intended by its key architects like McDowell and Lenihan. It is clearer, though, that the shorter term integration outcomes of Ireland’s mechanisms of civic stratification of immigrant groups has led to differential structural, institutional and interactional exclusions and inclusions from Irish society, largely depending on the migrant’s immigrant category and visible differences from the indigenous ‘Irish’. That individuals have been successful integrating into Irish society has little to do with Irish integration policy, and more to do with personal and social factors. So, civic stratification of immigrants combined with a fragmented integration policy is not a model for a socially cohesive nation, either in the present or the future. Perhaps, then, the next stage of Irish integration policy is a European-style national integration programme to coerce foreign nationals to assimilate, paid for (as in the current Dutch programme) by the immigrants, and justified by the relevant Minister of the DJELR as in the Irish national interest.

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